



March 17, 2022

Re: HB 5480 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg and Members of the Public Health Committee:

I am writing today as the current Chair of the Connecticut Psychological Association (CPA) Legislative Committee and a CT licensed Psychologist.

The Connecticut Psychological Association urges support of HB 5480 an act concerning the accessibility of mental health services. It is of note the new language added in section 1 Part B:

“(B) any person who is enrolled in a doctorate degree program in psychology approved under section 20-189 at an institution of higher education in the state who is providing, under the supervision of a psychologist licensed under chapter 383, professional psychological services, as defined in section 20-187a, as amended by this act, through the use of telehealth within a psychologist's scope of practice and in accordance with the standard of care applicable to the profession of psychology”

Allowing an opportunity such as this for doctorate level degree students to deliver services under the supervision of a licensed practitioner is a valuable and important step that can increase access to the well-needed behavioral health services across the state of Connecticut. Doctorate level students have traditionally been left out of the opportunity to deliver services at this level, despite the fact their colleagues enrolled in Master's programs have been allowed such under the supervision of a licensed provider for many years. It is note that doctoral students have already completed academic studies and clinical placements/internships commensurate with their colleagues in said Masters' programs of study.

We believe this can have a positive impact both on the enrollment of potential Psychologists into doctorate training programs and also increase consumers access to safe and effective services delivered by doctorate level trainee's within a controlled and supervised setting.

Connecticut consumers are in need of access to behavioral health services now, and this can serve as another important step toward improved access quickly. The Connecticut Psychological Association urges your immediate support HB 5480. Thank you for your time.

Marcy Russo, PhD
CPA Legislative Chair